

Lesson Coordinator Handbook for Fun and Effective Instruction

Swimming Ideas, LLC

<https://swimminglessonsideas.com>
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**A complementary book to
Teaching Swimming:
Fun and Effective Instruction**

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Lesson Coordinator Handbook for Fun and Effective Instruction: A companion book to
Teaching Swimming: Fun and Effective Instruction

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Parent Tot

Ages: 6months - 3 years

Testable Skills:

Age.

Is the swimmer old enough to stand in chest deep water alone without support on a bench?

Almost entirely requires age 3.

Skills for Guppies:

- Old enough: 2
- Do they follow directions without parent?

Instructors should know:

The best thing for an instructor to know about Parent Tot is confidence and nuance behind WHY we do the activities and games.

- Understanding of why we hold children the way we do.
- Understand the nuance of progressions.
- How to talk to adults; we know information they do not. Be confident in that.
- What different toys are good for infants and toddlers and the difference between them.
- How to sing and be engaging / entertaining.
- How to work a TV and internet connection.
- Ability to explain how to hold a child or demonstrate it with confidence.

Quick test:

Is the swimmer at least 6 months old and under 3?

Pool location for classes:

Shallow end or a comfortable depth for all participants to stand.

This class is for Parents and their infant/toddler children to experience swimming in a safe and fun class.

Supervisors look for:

Pay attention to staff that are outgoing, loud, and confident. They will be the first to jump at an opportunity to work with adults.

Most swim instructors that are younger (15-20) can be intimidated by working with adults and their children.

****REMEMBER****

People are signing up for a Parent Tot class for 2 reasons:

- They want to spend time in the water having fun with their child.
- They want to learn how to start teaching child to swim; or teach the child to swim.

They are coming to our program to LEARN what they do not, or DO what they cannot do alone.

It is our responsibility to give them the information (how to hold, what to do, what progressions to follow), and provide opportunities for the parent and child to bond in a safe welcoming environment.

Games, Songs, Education

Repeat everything always

Beyond repeating instructions and scripts for how to hold for front and back glides, repeat your activities and songs.

Infants and younger children love repetition because they know what is happening next.

Blues Clues played the same episode every day of the week. Kids love it. They'll love the predictability of the same songs, and the same flow at Parent Tot lessons.

Make the activities interesting and vertical.

Variations in progressions

Vertical activities are the skill variations available in each one: different support holds for front glides as example.

Each activity should have an option for a:

- Beginner infant 6mos.
- Beginner 1-2 yo.
- Experienced parent tot participant
- Advanced 2-3yo looking to explore the water.

The games and songs are all very individually based, instructors should be giving specific tailored feedback and instruction to parents on HOW to teach to their child's level of comfort.

Avoid lazy, uninterested, stale

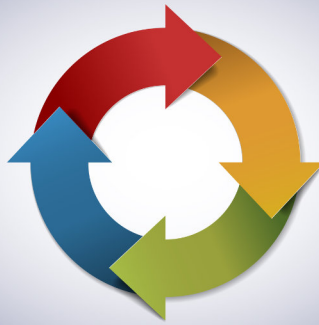
When the activities and songs/games are always the same it is natural for instructors to fall into a rut.

Signs your Parent Tot class is dull:

- Instructor doesn't get in the water.
- Instructor doesn't sing or dance to songs.
- Parents do their own things; not the group activities and songs but play independently.
- Instructor stands in one spot for more than a few minutes.
- Infants and toddlers are not excited about doing the songs or games.

Cure: Be active! Be engaged! Talk to parents!

Do



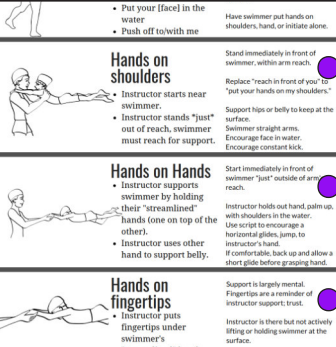
Activity 1:
Bubbles and Bobs
Ask everyone their age. Do that number of bobs with bubbles.
If swimmer does not want to go completely underwater, offer alternative following underwater progression:
Shoulders, Chin, Lips, Nose, etc.

Activity 2:
Walk around the pool
Push benches together, or in a space they can stand, walk in a square or circle.
Keep swimmers moving. Each time they get to a corner, kiss the water.

Activity 3:
Walk around the pool with bubbles
Continue walking in the same square space or across two benches.
Kiss the water in the corners, but when passing from one bench to the other must put lips in and blow bubbles.

Activity 4:
Introduce supported front glides with instructor.
Begin close, and support swimmer so that they do not go underwater.
Encourage chin in water.

Do



Hands on shoulders
• Put your [face] in the water.
• Push off to/with me.
• Have swimmer put hands on shoulders, hand, or initiate alone.
• Stand immediately in front of swimmer, within arm reach.
• Replace "reach in front of you" to "put your hands on my shoulders."
• Support hips or belly to keep at the surface.
• Swimmer straight arms.
• Encourage face in water.
• Encourage constant kick.

Hands on Hands
• Instructor supports swimmer by holding their "streamlined" hands (one on top of the other).
• Instructor uses other hand to support belly.
• Start immediately in front of swimmer "just" outside of arm reach.
• Instructor holds out hand, palm up, with shoulders in the water.
• Use script to encourage a horizontal glide, jump to instructor's hand.
• If comfortable, back up and allow a short glide before grasping hand.

Hands on fingertips
• Instructor puts fingertips under swimmer's "streamlined" hands.
• Support is largely mental.
• Fingertips are a reminder or instructor support; trust.
• Instructor is there but not actively lifting or holding swimmer at the surface.

• Beginner

• Moderate

• Advanced

Avoid





Avoid





Parent Tot Skills

Water comfort

The primary goal of a parent tot class is to increase the comfort and familiarity of the swimming pool and water to an infant.

We start lessons early to establish healthy, fun, memories of swimming.

The more comfortable a parent is in the water with their child, the more comfortable the child will be swimming for the long term.

Go slow. Build confidence. Earn trust, and look for happy babies.



Supported front glides

Parent skill:

- Football hold
- Palms up hold on belly
- Knowledge of scooping and face in water with kisses.

Swimmer skills:

- relaxed comfort with face in water, breath held, and arms straight.
- Joyful smiles when held by parent moving through water with ease.



Supported back glides

Parent skill:

- Head on shoulder
- Head in hand
- Fingertips under neck.

Swimmer skills:

- Comfortable laying on back with ears in water.
- Relaxed body, legs straight, body floating.



Scooping

Parent Skill:

- Football hold grip in front float.
- Consistent cue like "1, 2, 3!"
- Backwards step and scoop pushing water over the child's face.
- Smile and embrace.

Swimmer skills:

- Expectation of scoop and going under with comfort.
- Closed eyes, breath held, relaxed recovery.



Games, songs, splashing

Do the parent and swimmer join in the games songs and activities?

Parents and swimmers should have fun! The point of the class is to build confidence in the water together sharing in relaxed playful activities.

Do the parents and the swimmer look like they're having fun?

Are they laughing, playing, and exploring the pool?



Teach the parent

The parents are taking a Parent Tot class to learn how to swim; how to work with their child, and how to get their new child ready for the water.

They WANT to know what to do. We have more experience and mastery over progressions than they do.

Be bold. Explain why we play games, why we hold children certain ways, and what the benefits are.

Approach the parent frequently and have a conversation.

What are their goals? How can you help them with those goals?

Increase difficulty

Each parent tot skill has vertical difficulty; front floats can be done with hesitant swimmers and advanced 3 year olds.

You can do the same activity and have many different skill variations within the activity.

Make sure that while you're following a predictable pattern to your lessons you're also providing growth opportunities.

Follow up with a parent and show them the next step in the front float progression or the next advanced hold for supported back glides.

Make things harder as they master each step.

Training

The pink / red section is designed to walk a Lesson Coordinator, or Leader, through an in-person training for new and returning Swim Instructors.

Pages will follow a consistent format.

This book is for Lesson Coordinators, Leaders, managers, administration, and Aquatic Professionals.

It is intended as a guide for you to lead your training.

Left side page: Lesson Coordinator

Right side page: Activities for your training to be read/done with your trainees/participants.

1: Prepare in advance

Read the preparation side of the training before you begin.

While there is some relevant information for participants, the language is for you, to prepare your training in advance.

2: Bold red colors and text is for you!

The dark lines in red are intended to draw your eye. If you are skimming this page, look at the red bars and large text first.

Use the supplemental text as a guide for more context.

3: ½ training & challenge; ½ guidance

The right side page has a stack of Training Activity 1, Training Activity 2, and Challenge.

Text and instructions are written to be read aloud.

Again, we see pictures and bold red colors for YOU.

The left page is for you, the Lesson Coordinator.

Your objectives. Your goals, and participant goals.

This side is to prepare.

1. Setting Expectations

Timeline: 45 minutes

- 5 minutes: Greet participants as they enter training area. Direct to where to put items.
- 2 minutes: Begin training by getting everyone's attention. Introduce self.
- 3 minutes: Describe objective of training.
- 5 minutes: Describe outline and provide expectations. What will happen throughout the day, when, and what participants will need to do.
- 30 minutes: Activities 1 & 2, challenge

Leadership Actions:

1: Prepare space

Have your training space clearly defined before you begin.

Know where you will do group activities on land and in water.

Know times you have access to each.

2: Establish tone & tempo

Greet everyone that enters and tell them where to go.

Leadership defines the tone of a training.

Be professional, clear, mature, to ensure similar respect during the training.

3: Speak loud, clear, concise

Give simple direct commands and speak in simple sentences.

Be loud enough for all to hear.

Be confident in your delivery. "ummm"

30

Objective:

- Provide participants with a clear understanding of what they are going to do, how long your training will take, and what the training will be like.
- Introduce leadership, prepare participants for success.

Instructor Goals:

- Give participants clear expectations for the training; what is going to happen, when will it happen, and for how long.
- Establish tone and professionalism. Define what behavior should be like by your actions. Be loud, clear, respectful and you'll receive it in return. Avoid gossip, bullying, joking (inappropriately), and avoid distraction.
- Communicate clear timeline. When will you start and end.
- Make clear when you'll be on land, and when you'll be in the water.

Participant should learn:

- When they will be finished with the day
- When breaks will be
- When they will be in the water
- What they need to demonstrate
- What they will learn
- How training will run (what format will be used)
- Leadership's names and experience
- Where they can put their stuff, where the exits are, and where pool is

Icebreakers

Go first. Speak clearly

Let veterans go first



Prepare materials

Encourage talking



Go first: set the tone

See what happens!



Training Activity 1:

Icebreaker activity:

Using the following format say your "name," "years worked with agency," and "food you refuse to eat."

Example:

"Jeff Napolski, 10, eggplant."

After everyone has gone Leader should attempt to name everyone, OR name everyone's food they won't eat.

Allow others to attempt to recall all names, or all foods.

Training Activity 2:

Change:

Write small pieces of paper.

Each person writes a question they'd like answered related to swimming or work, or relevant to their lives.

2. Everyone finds 1 other person. Ask and answer each others questions.

Exchange questions. Person A takes Person B's question.

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How to Use This Section

What we are trying to convey:

Training is subjective, variable, and extremely dependent on your location and time. This is a framework for you to use verbatim at first, then iterate on as you grow more comfortable building your own training.

Time expectations are general. Some things move faster or slower.

Objectives: Define the purpose of the training section.

Leader Goals: Things you, the LC, should do.

Participant goals: Things the participants, the lesson instructors, should accomplish in the section.

What you will learn:

How to run a training session in person.

The framework Activity Activity, Challenge works beyond the water and is a cornerstone to our learning and training.

Follow the formula, follow the guides and your training can run well.

Read your stuff first

Know what you're doing before you begin.

Don't read the training guide during the training for the first time.

Be prepared.

Modules

Combine each section into one long training day, or split them apart into a broken training where each one is a separate module.

Iterate!

Take the framework and intent from the Activities and Challenges and make them your own.

Inject fun into your training! Be silly! Be joyous! Celebrate success and funny.

Facility specific notes:

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- Communicate clear timeline. When will you start and end.
- Make clear when you'll be on land, and when you'll be in the water.

Participant should learn:

- When they will be finished with the day
- When breaks will be
- When they will be in the water
- What they need to demonstrate
- What they will learn
- How training will run (what format will be used)
- Leadership's names and experience
- Where they can put their stuff, where the exits are, and where pool is

Icebreakers

Training Activity 1

Icebreaker activity:

Using the following format say your “name,” “years worked with agency,” and “food you refuse to eat.”

Example:

“Jeff Napolski, 10, eggplant.”

After everyone has gone Leader should attempt to name everyone, OR name everyone’s food they won’t eat.

Allow others to attempt to recall all names, or all foods.

Training Activity 2

Question exchange:

Distribute small pieces of paper.

1. Each person writes a question they’d like answered related to swimming or work, or relevant to their lives.
2. Everyone finds 1 other person. Ask and answer each others questions.
3. Exchange questions. Person A takes Person B’s question, etc.
4. Find new people to answer questions with exchanging questions as you go.

Challenge

Name everyone at training.

Name everyone’s food they won’t eat.

Match the top two best questions from Question Exchange to the person who wrote it.

=====
Challenge: Find your folk

In less than 30 seconds everyone in the room must separate into 3 groups without speaking:

1. Have food allergies,
2. Cat owners,
3. Left handed

Do not define where they go or how identified.

Go first. Speak clearly

Let veterans go first



Prepare materials

Encourage talking



Go first; set the tone

See what happens!



Problem Solving

Overcome struggles and issues with this section.

This is not a comprehensive list of things you'll face, but it should help prepare you for managing staff, setting parent expectations, and running a better program.

Remember to be proactive; do things before someone tells you to, or before problems rise.

Address staff directly, honestly, and in a collaborative tone and you'll be one step ahead of a manager that barks orders or does nothing.

There will be a myriad of things that go wrong, are challenging, or flat out difficult.

Ask for help.

Stop and think; what should I do?

Define what is most important, do that.

Get the best results by being honest, collaborative, and kind.

Parent Communication

You have more experience in swimming lessons than most parents. Be confident when you talk about levels, skills, and progress. You are an expert.

- Approach parents first, be proactive. Go to them, ask, "What swimming questions do you have?"
- Be honest. Explain your program, why you do things, and how that relates to their child.
- Remain firm regarding safety decisions.
- Define levels, provide written examples of skills, and point out how the child is doing.
- Use an active lesson as an example.
- Remain calm; they want answers and you have them!

Be honest and brief. Parents don't need a long speech. They want an answer and appreciate explanations like "why" your program does things. Parents care about their child's safety and progress.

Train and review procedures with Aquatic Professionals to build confidence and mastery over your programming.

1. Address parents first - allow questions. Avoid ignoring the parents. Go to them regularly with updates. Approach them before they feel like they need to track you down just to get an answer.

2. When I know it's okay to say. If they ask you something about their child be honest. If you don't know, don't make something up. Investigate, research, talk to instructors, or wait a class then report back.

3. Explain the "why" and the "how". Be sure to know up if you promise to do something. Parents want to understand the system. If they have a question, address it best you can and provide context for why.

Address issues that wear off, and build parent confidence and trust when you follow up.

1: Left side pages: Description, Tips, Tools

The pages on the left side identify issues, problems, or challenges, and attempt to give you focusing tools to overcome them.

There are so many things that we need to know and focus on as a Lesson Coordinator / Aquatic Professional that we cannot cover them all.

Our goal is to give examples and options to use in your toolbox.

2: Right side pages: Solutions and fine points

You'll find a stack of 3 items on the right side pages. They are intended to work in rows:

Title and clear example, an informative picture, and key points related to the title to help you succeed in your actions.

This book is for YOU to use as a guide and reference.

3: How to handle job challenges outside water

This section is about the part of running a swim lesson program that isn't "in the water teaching."

As a leader of your swimming program you are tasked with communicating to parents, handling groups, organizing instructors and swimmers, and dealing with random events.

Testing

Quick Testing

Define the single essential skill for each of your levels.

Level 1: go underwater alone.

Level 2: independent glides.

Level 3: Front crawl side breathing; no lifting head.

Level 4: IM. Know all 4 competitive strokes; able to do all pieces if not whole swim.

1 helper: organize group and keep occupied, direct traffic.

1 INS: In water with 1-3 swimmers at a time. Do quick tests.

1 leader: documents level on rosters and updates records.

Group by age and further segment as needed, gender, height, etc.

For each group:

1 leader: documents level on rosters and updates records.

1 INS: In water with 1-3 swimmers at a time. Do quick tests.

1 helper: organize group and keep occupied, direct traffic.

Group by age first:

• 3 years, 5-6, and 8+ will generally all be about the same skill level.

Refine groups by skill:

• Watch each class, and create "levels." Move swimmers to their appropriate level group.

Adjust as needed. Move swimmers mid-lesson.

Drop in Classes / Spot testing

Group by age first:

• 3 years, 5-6, and 8+ will generally all be about the same skill level.

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TRACK RECORD

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Adjust as needed. Move swimmers mid-lesson.

Categorize first; nuance later

The goal of Quick Testing is to assign levels super fast.

Experienced Leaders can quick test a person in about 30 seconds of interaction.

Focus on speed. Go under? No. Lvl 1.

Refine levels and groups later as you see the swimmer in the water more.

Update your records to match.

Testing: brief & keep moving

Use Quick Test criteria.

Once assessed get swimmer out of water and direct to alternate activity on land.

Work as a team to test many swimmers quickly.

Leader should focus on stopping swimmer at appropriate test.

INS should direct swimmers in water.

Age > comfort > skill > refine

Without any extra info other than age put all the same age together.

Watch the class once it starts, move swimmers to other groups with similar ability.

Works great for classes where the participants can change every day/week.

Update records to use level in future.

How to Use This Section



Tools to fix problems

This section highlights problems you might face and attempts to give you solutions.

When you see instructors without their shoulders in the water, standing around playing with kick boards, remind them to keep moving.

Left side pages = general help

Use the left side to understand the concept, learn general tips and tools to being a better leader, and shape how you are going to respond to challenges.

Right side pages = specific examples

Use the right side pages to further develop your response and actions using examples.

The right side should be your walk-through, step -by - step guide to solving problems.

Facility Specific Notes:

Facility notes

Level Assessments

How to test swimmers on a “testing day” and when you have enroll by day classes.

How to test swimmers quickly in less than 30 seconds; quick test.

4 types of testing:

- Testing day
- Drop in / test during class
- Prior records; last evaluation
- Self-reported by parents/swimmer.

Choose the testing or assessment that works best for your situation.

Assess swimmer skill often and UPDATE your records. Whether you use an online database like www.swimlessons.pro or something else, make sure it is accurate.

Adapt your assessment style based on the scenario you're in:

- Summer camp swim lessons with 300+ swimmers: Testing day using quick test, then spot check ability during the classes.
- Small indoor lessons: group by age, then assess using quick test, adjust classes, then document specifics.
- Returning swimmer: use records and place by level documented. Update as needed.



1: Leverage quick tests

What skills are crucial to each level?

Level 1: Go underwater
Level 2: Independent glides
Level 3: Side breathing Front crawl
Level 4: Individual Medley: IM

The screenshot shows a swimmer's profile in a database. The swimmer is named J Napolski. The profile includes sections for Mastered Level, Mastered Skill, Swimmer Evaluated, Evaluation Notes, and Level Evaluated. The Mastered Level section shows a list of levels: Level 1, Level 2, Level 3, and Guppies Toddler. The Mastered Skill section shows a list of skills: L1: Go underwater without touching bottom and recover to standing. The Swimmer Evaluated section shows a dropdown menu with 'Test, Tester Testy' selected. The Evaluation Notes section shows a text area with the following text: 'Tester has done a wonderful job putting their face in the water! They are confident about going under, lifting their feet off the ground and standing up again. When they're more relaxed on backfloats with support and front glides they'll be ready for Level 2.' The Level Evaluated section shows a list of levels: Guppies Toddler, Level 1, and Level 2, with Level 1 selected.

2: Track your data; online or written

Keep track of your swimmer's progress.

Use a database, excel, SharePoint, swimlessons.pro, etc. Or write it down and keep your records available.

Update often with skill growth and specific notes.

3: Evaluate swimmers officially

Send evaluations to your swimmers and their families at regular intervals.

Have a standard evaluation form that shares their level, skill progress, and personal notes based on observation.

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Update your records to match.

Testing Day

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For each group:

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1 helper: organize group and keep occupied; direct traffic.



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Without any extra info other than age put all the same age together.

Watch the class once it starts; move swimmers to other groups with similar ability.

Works great for classes where the participants can change every day/ week.

Update records to use level in future.

Swimming & Meditation

Meditation is training your thoughts to do what YOU want them to do, not what the brain wants.

Some describe your brain as the “monkey brain” doing instinctual things.

When we’re teaching swimming we want the swimmers to be deliberate with their actions and swimming strokes.

Meditation is the PRACTICE of making your brain do exactly what YOU want it to do.

We use focus on breath as a tool to train your brain to do something very boring: focus on breathing.

Boring thought is super difficult because the brain craves stimulation.

Training yourself to focus on your breath isn’t about the breath. It has nothing to do with thinking about your breathing.

It is all about training your thoughts to focus on what you CHOOSE to think about.

Our goal is to train our swimmers to think about their swimming with deliberate specific practice.

We want to encourage swimmers, just like meditation encourages purposeful thoughts, to purposefully control their bodies in very specific swimming motions.



1: Focus, Focus, Play

Activity, Activity, Challenge is deliberate. We want short bursts of intense focus followed by a palate cleanser: challenges.

We ask that swimmers give energy and attention to doing the activities well, then allow a fun and engaging refresher with the challenges.



2: Short distances = intense thought & skill

We restrict longer swims because we want the swimmer to spend their energy doing the short brief burst of action with powerful effort.

Demand excellence. Demand performance. Demand that swimmers put their effort into each attempt. We demand by asking, giving feedback and praise.



3: Thoughts develop into actions

Swimming requires specific unnatural movements.

Swimmers need to think, or tell their limbs to move in those choreographed movements.

What starts with their will translates into action.

Deliberate Practice

Clear explanation of skill

The instructor must clearly define what skill they are asking a swimmer to do.

Provide visual, example, or video of the skill.

Allow the swimmer to attempt it and fail.

Make it clear what the instructor wants, and aim the swimmer at that vision.



Know where you're going

The swimmer needs to know what the target skill is and what it looks like.

Once they understand, they can model it, or ape it.

Movements will be sloppy, erratic, raw at first.

Refine through multiple attempts.

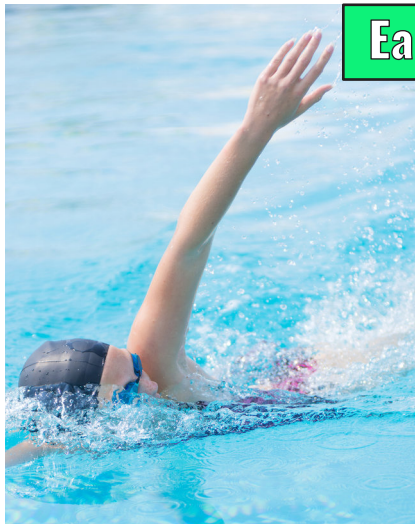
Thoughtful attempts at skill

Our goal is to provide opportunity for deliberate practice; or the focused thought at improving or doing a specific action.

We want the swimmer to do 3 strokes of freestyle returning to position 11 with each stroke.

Do they think about position 11? Do they thoughtfully put their hands in position 11?

Thought leads to action.



Each attempt is deliberate

Each attempt or round of 3 x SL + 3 FREE in Position 11 should include a specific thought in the swimmer to do something specific.

Maybe on the first round it is to just meet the instructions; streamline and do 3 strokes.

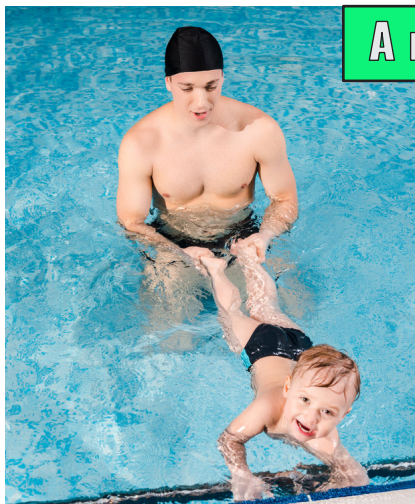
Maybe on the second round the thought is to hit position 11 with a straight elbow.

Improvement from feedback

The final piece of deliberate practice is feedback from a "master."

With every attempt our goal is to provide feedback to the swimmer.

If they are going to put the effort into thinking about doing something well, we have to put the effort into watching them, evaluating that effort, and providing feedback intended to improve them.



A master's eye accelerates

Swimmers will learn faster when a "master" gives relevant feedback.

The swim instructor is the master.

The feedback the swim instructor gives to a focused attempt will dramatically increase new skill acquisition.

The instructor's feedback is a CRUCIAL role in accelerating learning.